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Dear Sisters,

In April of this year, approximately 50 members of the National Black Feminist Organization met in Detroit for our National Meeting. The meeting was for the purpose of planning NBFO's first convention. It was attended by representatives from chapters and forming chapters of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Lansing, Los Angeles, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia and Richmond. Inclement weather prevented Washington, D. C.'s attendance.

The convention will be held on October 10-13th in Washginton, D. C. The meeting site agreed upon at the meeting was L.A., but subsequent developments in California have made it necessary to change the site. Meeting participants voted not to hold the convention in any state that had not passed the Equal Rights Amendment. The Conference will be held at the American University at Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues, NW. The contact person in D.C. is Anita Smith at 6613 7th Place, NW Tele. (202) 726-2850. Child care will be provided.

The agenda for the National Meeting covered purpose and philosophy, national structure, current and long range goals, membership and by-laws. There was time spent in discussing of activities and problems of each forming chapter, and included their priority goals and issues.

A great deal of discussion centered around the dues structure.. Presently dues are ~~on a sliding scale based on income~~ and the amounts payable are suggested. It was generally agreed that one flat rate should be charged. The amount unanimously approved was \$12.50 annually. We felt that the \$1. and change monthly would more genuinely reflect our commitment to feminism and allow for more realistic and dependable budgeting on both the national and local level.

A list of national priority issues was made to give focus and direction to the organization along with special projects. They are: 1) Self Image (media, sexuality); 2) Education (sex and race role stereotyping, feminist education, child care); 3) Health (abortion, forced sterilization, suicide, etc.); 4) Employment & Economics (decriminalization of prostitution, oppression of household technicians, welfare, etc.); 5) Crime & Law (the battered woman, rape and sexual abuse, the penal system, etc.) 6) Religion (as it relates to the Black woman); 7) The Black Lesbian (triple oppression, lesbian mothers, oppression of Black lesbians in movements, etc.). Special projects are: 1) Research on Black women; 2) Legislation & lobbying on all levels; 3) Black women's cultural development.

The suggested by-laws were reviewed thoroughly and input was spirited and intelligent. They are too voluminous to present here. However, the amended by-laws will be submitted to the national paid membership prior to the convention so that everyone will have an opportunity to review them. In this way the entire paid membership can be abreast of plans for NBFO's structure and operation and have either personal input at the convention, or make their desires known to their chapters so that chapter delegates can closely represent the thinking of their chapter paid members at the convention.

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As time marched on, and NBFO grew, it became increasingly apparent to many local (NYC) members of the Organization that it was necessary to form their own chapter. They had been relying on the National Office Coordinating Council for all procedural activities, planning CR groups for them, holding the monthly General Meetings etc. They realized while all across this country Forming Chapters were springing up (there is at least one Forming Chapter in each state!!) they had not made any moves in this direction. There are 5 boroughs in the NYC area, consequently there is a very large membership here. While the Coordinating Council served them very well, the time had arrived for a NYC Forming Chapter to be born. So heads got together and ideas were discussed, the following article outlines the result.

June Murray-Gill

NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER FORMED...

New York City will at last launch its Chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization when City women come together at its first General Information meeting on Wednesday, August 20th, at 500 East 62nd Street.

The first rumblings of the new Chapter were heard early in May when an Ad Hoc Committee met at the NBFO office in Manhattan. The Ad Hoc Committee, Beverly Davis, Hortense Barber, Cynthia Cornish and Audrey Barnes, recognized the need for a Chapter independent of the National Organization's Coordinating Council. With the National Coordinating Council's approval, as a forming Chapter, the four women initiated the first of many planning sessions.

The Ad Hoc Committee will present several creative concepts to Chapter members at the August 20th meeting. General meetings will be expanded beyond the information forums to stimulating action planning sessions. Committees yet to be formed will be groups actively working in several diverse areas, including creative writing, rape, feminist legislation, consciousness raising, and communications/media. Gradually, as other areas of interest arise from the membership, new committees will be formed. All key issues such as a dues schedule, elections, a membership drive and committee formation will be finalized by the membership.

It has been suggested that the new forming chapter be headed by a Coordinating Council. The General Meetings will continue being held every 3rd wednesday of each month at 500 East 62nd Street, N.Y.C. at 7 P.M. The topics for discussion in forthcoming meetings (Sept. 17, and Oct. 15) will stress "Consciousness Raising" and "Women in Prison", respectively. For the latter meeting, there will be two guest speakers with considerable knowledge on the subject.

A New York City Conference planned for early November is in the works. You will be informed about the details as soon as all plans are concrete.

All interested, committed help is needed to get the new Chapter off the ground. Sisters can call the office at 889-5881 for information or to offer their services.

Joy Barnes

BLACK SISTERHOOD

During the 60's, Black people went through some tremendous changes. We started demanding to hear more about our Black heritage in schools. We started letting our hair go "natural", we started calling ourselves self-appointed African names. We started having meetings and socials for "Black Only". All of this was "accepted" by the outside world because it was understood that we needed to get our "shit" together. Black people had to separate from white people so that we could talk and scream at one another freely. We had to go behind closed doors and decide whether we were "colored", "Negro", Afro-american", "Pan-African" or "Black". After we got it together, we told the world about it.

Women have found it equally necessary to separate from men in order for us to go through consciousness raising. We had to find out that we were not all alone in our thoughts and ideologies. We decided that we no longer could accept "chick", "fox", "broad", "Hey baby", "momma" and "girl" in place of what we rightfully are- women.

Black women are finding that it is time for us to go one step further. We have found the Black movement and the Women's Movement to be inadequate in the area of Black Womanhood. In the Black movement we find men and women working(almost together) on tilted scales. Black men get fancy leadership, titles, prestige and money. Black women, for the most part receive secondary positions, titles and money. On top of that we find Black men treating Black Women in very typical sexist manners. The fact is that Black men are reared the same way that white men are reared when it comes to Women. In the Women's Movement, we find that racism has not purged itself. Some white women have no idea that by saying things like "We need more Black women in the Women's Movement" and "You are so articulate" is very oppressive to us. Those reasons coupled with your own personal experiences indicate that the time is right for a Black Feminist Movement.

Within this Feminist Movement we will find that our directions are multi-faceted but that we can embrace under the umbrella of "Black Sisterhood." We have to deal with issues that directly affect us in this racist, sexist society. We must be about having communications with our poor sisters, incarcerated sisters, household technicians, welfare mothers and other Black Women who comprise over 51% of our Black population. We must be ready, willing and able to lend a hand to a Black Woman--even if it is just a shoulder to cry on.

I believe that Black Sisterhood is one of the most powerful, yet untapped Revolutionary sources that we have available to us. It must start however, within each individual. There is no magic formula as to how and where it will operate. Two techniques that I have tried and has proven to be effective is one-to-one communications and Black Women's Workshops. I will sit down in a second with a Black woman, introduce myself and try to develop a dialouge. I have found that the many Women that I am in contact with on college campuses are not fond of the word, Feminism because they do not understand what it means. Therefore, I talk about the same issues until I find that we are mostly agreeing with one another. Then I tie in our conversation with similarities in the Women's Movement. In workshops, I give a short introductory speech and then let women take the conversation to any level that they want. After workshops, I find that many Black Sisters are eager to further the dialouge. These are techniques that have helped me; maybe you have other ways. Whatever the case, we will keep trying until we find something that works.

Sylvia Witts Vitale is a co-founder and first Vice-Chairwoman of NBFO. She currently tutors English at Kingsborough Community College.

'Check it out ...

Kim Jarvis, a mother, good person and a Feminist has left us. She died in tragic circumstances, but what is more tragic, she has left her son-first fatherless, now motherless. NBFO is trying to help this 6 year old youngster as we are sure you will too. Kim worked at Queens College, N.Y. supporting her son and herself. She was new to the Feminist world but her enthusiasm was unmatched. She was in the middle of planning a Talk Show with members of the NBFO Coordinating Council for the radio station on Queens College campus when fate took her from us.

I think you all can imagine whether you are mothers or not, what it would be like to suddenly die and leave your child so defenseless, so vulnerable in today's world. Death is always untimely, but there are those of us who will have a hint, a warning, a chance to set some things right. Kim's death was not like this. Her son faces life parentless and more than his share of hardships. A Kim Jarvis Fund has been set up to benefit her son. So far over \$1,000 has been collected in the past 3 months. Not enough. Not nearly enough. Before you put this newsletter down and forget Kim and her little son, reach into your pocket and send whatever you can. And please remember this familiar quote I'm sure we've all heard from time to time "There, but for the Grace of God go I."

Thank you for helping your Sister. Send all contributions in care of Sylvia Witts Vitale, 116-43 141 St. So. Ozone Park, N.Y. 11436

Pat Arnold, the Treasurer for the National Office, NBFO, has come up with a great idea that may help many of you. Often, we receive in the office letters from businesses notifying us of job opportunities. And we also receive letters from our members seeking employment. Well, Pat has decided to singlehandedly connect the two. She welcomes all your resumes-please include your areas of interest, if you can drive and have a license, if you are willing to be relocated and all your skills and education, clearly typed--and we'll see what happens! If you know of a job-send a letter to Pat and let her know about it, there

just might be a Sister who needs that one job. We have no funds allocated for this service so please enclose a self addressed envelope and more than one copy of your resume, a few extra stamps wouldn't hurt either to help with the cost of sending your resume to what may turn out to be your future employer! Pay Arnold, NBFO 285 Madison Avenue, NYC 10017 2nd. fl.

The NBFO Newsletter is only a reflection of the women involved in the Women's Movement. We hope to bring to our members news of our Sisters from all the NBFO groups. When you have news or something you think will be of interest to your Sisters please send it to us. We try to make this a free flowing vehicle that will bind us all together but we need more participation from our readers. Send your suggestions to: The Newsletter Committee 285 Madison Ave. N.Y.C. N.Y. 10017 Thank you. Patricia Arnold, Amelia Headley, and June Murray-Gill

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NBFO Sisters worked long and hard hours at the National Meeting which was very beautifully hosted by the Detroit chapter and the cohesiveness was very strongly felt. It is hoped that the convention will yeild an organizational structure that will make our coming years fruitful and fulfilling.

In 1973 two bills (Chapters 168 and 325) were enacted in the Massachusetts Legislature which made it illegal to deny or terminate credit, credit services or effect someone's credit standing on the basis of sex or marital status. These two laws can be enforced either through Private Right of Action or a complaint can be filed with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. Although Mass. now has the strongest credit laws in the country, women are still struggling to receive equal consideration to their male counterpart. To date, women comprise 44% of the work force; 41% of wives living with their husbands have become workers and 6.6 million families are headed by women. If you feel you have been denied credit for reasons based on sex or marital status take the case directly to court as a Private Right of Action or contact MCAD.

CHECK IT OUT continued...

FOR SALE...

We now have available for purchase NBFO Cotton T-shirts! They are beige with bright green printing. In the center of the front there is the Feminist insignia with the name of our organization circling it. We have them in men's sizes S,M,L,XL. \$5.00 each plus 50¢ for postage. We have been walking around wearing everyone's slogan, now we can be proud--and wear our own! Soon, we will also have NBFO note and memo pads in pastels and white. \$1.50 each.

We would like to announce the appointment of Patricia Johnson to the Coordinating Council. She will replace Doreen McGill who resigned earlier this year.

The Greater N.Y. Feminist Credit Union is in formation. We are looking forward to an opening date in late Sept. NBFO is a sponsoring organization, so all paid members of NBFO are entitled to join the Credit Union. Some of the benefits of belonging to this credit union are: 1. with each share you buy you become more and more an owner of the credit union--it is cooperative; 2. this is a unique way to establish a good credit rating; 3. all members are eligible for loans; 4. no co-signers are needed for loans, etc.--you are economically self-sufficient; 5. each member has an equal voice in the functions and management policies; 6. savings are insured up to \$40,000! There are many other reasons why joining this credit union is a sensible decision to make. And you DO NOT have to live in the NY area to join. Write NBFO's Treasurer, Pat Arnold for more details and information- 285 Madison Ave. NYC 10017 2nd floor.

Anyone interested in joining a CR group for gay women in the N.Y. area should contact either Deborah Singleton or Beverly Davis at the NY office 889-5881.

SECOND ANNUAL PICNIC...SUCCESS!

On July 19th the NBFO held its 2nd Annual Picnic in Central Park, N.Y.C. The purpose for this occasion is to bring information on NBFO to women who might otherwise never understand NBFO. Also, we find this is a nice way to change the pace and take time to laugh together. This year's Picnic was extremely well attended...over 60 Sisters were rapping together, laughing and eating lunch, which for the most part, was provided by NBFO. Some women played softball and volleyball, others were quite happy to sit in the grass and meet new Sisters, exchange ideas and share experiences. For others, it was an opportunity to become better acquainted with NBFO and many of the N.Y.C. members. You were missed!

Many of the NEW NBFO T-SHIRTS were purchased--they're going fast!--shown around as another symbol of pride and Feminism.

We are already making plans for our 3rd Annual Picnic, and while this year we had women driving down from Mass. and Conn. and up from Va.--we really hope to see women attend from further distances and make NEXT year's Picnic an even greater success.

Amelia Headley and Patricia Arnold

Sisters...one major request. This is the third issue of the NBFO Newsletter. So far, the reception has been favorable. But, in order for it to continue, the Newsletter staff needs help. You don't have to have a Ph.D. or journalism experience, just a desire to help Black women help each other. That's all we are trying to do! We need every pair of hands, beautiful thoughts, creative ideas and folks to lick stamps that we can find. Each Newsletter is HAND folded, HAND addressed and HAND stamped. Don't you think this Newsletter is important enough to you to give some of your time? Even a little? Please call us to say you are ready to take an active part in NBFO...June Murray-Gill 850-8982; Amelia Headley 476-8587; Pat Arnold 993-7352 or the office- 889-5881

BLACK GRAPEVINE

ATLANTA: contact Ms. Sandra Holland Flowers, NBFO 528 Beckwith Court, S.W., Atlanta 30314; 404-688-5184

BALTIMORE: any Sisters interested in beginning a chapter here should contact Carletta Gladden 1614 Burnwood Road Baltimore 21239; 301-323-1678

BOSTON: contact Demita Frazier, NBFO 26A Moultrie, Dorchester, Mass. 02124 02124

contact margaret snell-kozak 179 Jersey St. Buffalo 14201; 716-881-6184

CHICAGO: contact Gwen Braxton 5400 S. Hopper, Apt. 203 312-752-0744

D. C.: contact Judy Fisher NBFO, 2452 18th Street NW

DETROIT: Janet Salters, NBFO 2467 Helen St. Detroit 48207; 312-924-5604

HOUSTON: Brenda Lewis, NBFO 9717 Timberside #79, Houston 77025 713-668-0251

KANSAS CITY: N.B.F.O. Kansas City 72-47 Wyandotte, K.C., MO. 64114

LOS ANGELES: Bernice Mattingly #6 3406 Garden Ave. L.A. 90039 213-664-9763

NEW HAVEN: Beverly Morrow Rm. 426 420 Temple St. New Haven 06511

National Black Feminist Organization Newsletter
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NEW YORK CITY* newest Chapter,
see article. 285 Madison Ave.
N.Y.C. 10017 2nd Floor

PHILADELPHIA NBFO: Penn. Women's Center, Logan Hall, Univ. of Pa. Philadelphia, 19104

RALEIGH, N.C. is progressively forming their chapter. It's members have become involved in the formation of a Rape Crisis Center in which NBFO members are counselors. The state of N.C. has a Black Women's Collective called "The Concerned Women for Justice", this group addressed itself to assisting women in the Women's prison.

Raleigh Sisters have joined forces and are actively participating with that organization. The program will "involve NBFO members serving as a liaison between women in the various dormitories on the campus of women in prisons." Raleigh has formed a steering committee and since its inception consciousness raising sessions were held. One was held in April and there will be more CR sessions held and new members are being recruited!

WESTCHESTER: Jane Wilson NBFO 415 Gramantan Ave. Mt. Vernon, 10552 914-664-6557



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